

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HR 19/HCR 45 REQUESTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT  
OF DEFENSE TO ESTABLISH AND FUND A VETERAN WOMEN SERVICES  
COORDINATOR POSITION WITHIN THE OFFICE  
OF VETERANS' SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN, JR.  
DIRECTOR OF THE STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

April 07, 2015

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair San Buenaventura and Committee Members:

I am Ron Han, Director of the Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the concepts on House Resolution 19/House Concurrent Resolution 45.

Funding for this position was submitted in the division's biennium request but did not receive approval. A House and Senate Bill were introduced to obtain funding through the State Legislature during this session. If funding is not approved through this process, the State Office of Veterans Services will review a third alternative in having an existing Veterans Counselor take on an additional duty and to focus on issues affecting Women Veterans.

The State Office of Veterans Services recognizes the strong need to develop programs and to address critical issues affecting this fastest growing group of veterans.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of Hawaii's Veteran community.

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Betty Sestak	AAUW Windward	Support	No

Comments: STRONG SUPPORT FOR HCR45/HR19, that request the establishment and funding for a veterans coordinator (counselor IV) position within the Office of Veterans' Services, to assist all veterans, with a primary focus on female veterans who served on active duty for the full period they were activated.



April 7, 2015

TO: Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Representative Joy San Buenaventura, Vice Chair and  
Members of the Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Co-Chair

RE: HR 19/HCR 45 REQUESTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO  
ESTABLISH AND FUND A VETERAN WOMEN SERVICES COORDINATOR  
POSITION WITHIN THE OFFICE OF VETERANS' SERVICES  
Hearing: Tuesday, April 7, 2015, 2:00 p.m., Room 325

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in support of HR19 and HCR 45 which requests that the State Department of Defense establish and fund a Women's Veterans Coordinator position in the Office of Veteran Services (OVS).

In 2013 the Hawai'i Military Women's Taskforce submitted a report to the legislature recommending that a Women's Veteran's Coordinator position be established in order to help address the unique needs of women in active duty and of women veterans, needs that are often different from those of their male counterparts. The coordinator will fill a gap in care and will aid with the process of helping the approximately 12,000 women veterans in Hawai'i to move forward in their lives. The coordinator would help the OVS to collect data, integrate services and move forward on the Task Force's recommendations.

As with other organizations where women are a distinct minority; programs and services were originally established and created for male populations. Those benefits and services have been designed to address the needs of men rather than women. Women need gender appropriate programs, benefits, and services; nowhere is this more evident than for healthcare services and for military sexual trauma, a result of sexual assault while in the military.

It is important to recognize the specific and distinctive needs of women in their effort to re-enter civilian lives, retrain for new careers, establish homes for themselves and their families, and to care for their families. Establishing a Coordinator position will help focus the OVS on gender appropriate, effective care for women

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii's women and girls. It is because of this mission, the Women's Caucus supports this important measure.

We thank the committee for this opportunity to submit our testimony.